

## Making Headway in Municipal Reforms

The campaign which Mr. Charles W. Bryan has been making in Lincoln, Nebraska, to reduce the cost of living is bearing fruit. In the city election last spring he advocated the establishment of a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market and a municipal ice plant for the purpose of restoring competition and breaking the monopolies in these essential necessities of life. After being elected by a majority of all the votes cast at the election as one of the five city commissioners with the understanding on the part of the people that the candidate who received the highest vote of those who had announced their preference for the position of mayor would be selected for the place by the commission, the other four commissioners over-rode the will of the people and assigned Mr. Bryan to the position of superintendent of streets and public improvements. He announced that he would hold the position of commissioner of streets provided the public, whose will had been thwarted by the other commissioners, would proceed to circulate petitions for the purpose of adopting by direct vote under the initiative and referendum provision of the charter ordinances covering the municipal coal, ice and public market, and he also recommended that the public bring recall proceedings against two members of the council so that if they succeeded in carrying the municipal projects at the election, they would elect two commissioners at the same time, who, in conjunction with Mr. Bryan, would make a majority of the council to go ahead and carry out the will of the people by putting the initiated ordinances into operation.

After the ordinances were written and the petitions put in circulation, which require 2,100 signers to bring about a special election, Mr. Bryan introduced the municipal coal ordinance and the municipal market ordinance in the city council. At the council meeting Aug. 7 the council rejected the municipal coal ordinance and the municipal public market ordinance. In the meantime the work continued of circulating petitions to bring about a special election. The pressure on the city council by the public and the prospects of a recall on two of the commissions so impressed the other members of the council with the importance of giving the public some relief from the coal monopoly and not desiring to admit that they had to back up and accept the ordinances of Mr. Bryan, they introduced a resolution in the council meeting on Aug. 14 establishing a coal yard by resolution and placing it in the department presided over by Mr. Bryan the same as his ordinance placed it.

At the council meeting Mr. C. W. refused to support the resolution on the ground that the council had no legal authority to authorize the buying and selling of coal and pledge the city's credit therefor by resolution and cited the sections of the charter and the statutes to show that it was necessary to do it by ordinance. He challenged the city attorney and the members of the council to cite any authority in the city charter or statutes whereby they could legislate by resolution and he put the proposition up to them to either back up and adopt the ordinance or he would insist that the matter be carried to the people in an election and that they would adopt the ordinance within sixty days by direct vote.

The members of the council under vigorous protests, excuses, explanations, etc., finally consented to the resolution being changed into an ordinance, and it was passed under the emergency clause and takes immediate effect in establishing a municipal coal yard in Lincoln in the exact form that Mr. Bryan insisted it must be done, and the council provided the exact amount of money that Mr. Bryan's original ordinance stipulated that it would be necessary to provide.

Lincoln now has a municipal coal yard, and Mr. Bryan will commence work at once to secure a coal supply at a reasonable price.

During last week the ice company in Lincoln, which has a monopoly, reduced the price of ice to the amount of about \$10,000 per month to Lincoln ice consumers. This reduction was brought about as a direct result of the campaign that has been on in Lincoln to call a special election to vote bonds to establish a municipal ice plant. There was a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce behind closed doors between a group of profiteers and the officials of the ice company, in which ways and means were discussed to head off the movement Mr. Bryan

had under way in Lincoln to vote bonds to establish a municipal ice plant, and it was determined at the meeting by those present that in their opinion the best way to stop the movement for a municipal ice plant was to immediately reduce the price of ice. The ice company acted on this decision the following day and announced that the new ice rates would go into effect immediately making a reduction from \$12.00 to \$10.00 per ton delivered.

In place of stopping the movement to vote bonds for a municipal ice plant, it has proven to the people of Lincoln that the only way to deal with a monopoly is by restoring competition, and the work of circulating petitions to secure signers for the purpose of calling the special election goes on with more enthusiasm than before. As it will be necessary for Lincoln people to have an election in order to provide an appropriation to establish a public market and to vote bonds to establish a municipal ice plant, the movement for the special election will continue, and as it has been demonstrated that the other four members of the city council are opposed to a municipality establishing municipal projects to curb the profiteers it is probable that at the same time the special election is held for the purpose of establishing a public market and a municipal ice plant, there will be an effort made to recall two members of the city council so that these measures may be carried into effect by men who are in favor of them after the people have adopted the ordinances by direct vote.

### LINCOLN'S MUNY COAL YARD

A Lincoln special telegram to the Omaha Bee, under date of Aug. 16, says: "Brother Charley" Bryan won another fight here today when the Lincoln commissioners passed an ordinance providing for establishment of a municipal coal yard.

Bryan's demand for a municipal ice plant was withdrawn a few weeks ago when the Beatrice Creamery company, sole distributors of ice in Lincoln, announced that in the future it would sell ice for the same price that the commodity is sold by the municipal ice plant in Omaha.

Referendum petitions calling for a public market, Bryan's last demand, and recall of Mayor Frank Zehrung and a city commissioner for their alleged opposition to this plan, which, it is declared, the people expressed a desire to work out by giving Bryan a bigger vote than Zehrung in the city election, are being circulated by Bryan's friends.

There was hope expressed here today that the last of the Bryan plans would be carried out by the city commissioners rather than to face a recall and referendum election.

### OKLAHOMA DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S CONSTITUTION

Extracts from the constitution of the Democratic State Central Committee of Oklahoma:

The State Central Committee being the highest governing body of the Democratic party does hereby adopt the following as the constitution of the Democratic party of the state of Oklahoma.

#### ARTICLE IV

Section 1. The State Central Committee may in its discretion in the month of December immediately preceding any year in which a state election is to be held issue a call for a state conference for the purpose of giving the rank and file of the Democratic party of the state an opportunity to advise and recommend a Democratic state ticket for all officers elected at the general election by the entire state.

Section 3. The state conference shall be called to order by the chairman of the State Central Committee and the secretary of the State Central Committee shall act as secretary until the election of a temporary organization. When the conference is permanently organized, it shall adopt a platform of principles and shall proceed to the recommendation of a state ticket by a two-thirds vote to be recommended to the Democratic voters of the state, to be nominated in the primary.

Section 4. No delegates from the precinct to the county conference or from the county conference to the state conference shall be instructed how they shall vote upon any proposition or for any candidate, and no delegation shall be placed under the unit rule, to the end that the conference of representative Democrats may nominate free and untrampled by bosses a ticket that will merit the support of the party.

If President Harding succeeds in bringing about world peace through universal disarmament he will earn and receive the gratitude of all future generations.

## Legislation for All the People

Representative Frear's protest against the course of tax revision as thus far indicated ought to be given prayerful consideration by Republican leadership. In tariff making there was plenty of evidence that the influences which represent special privilege rather than considerations of general national welfare were at work with all their effectiveness of past years. The personality of many of the men in chief charge of the tariff bill is in itself a warning to which more farsighted Republicans are not blind. The party was returned to power as a protest against a costly and dangerous internationalism and want of practical grasp of our home problems, not as an indorsement of past weaknesses of Republican policy or management.

If Republican legislation, both as to the tariff and the revision of the incidence of taxation, is not governed by broad considerations of the general weal, Republican control of congress will be lost, probably at the next election, and deservedly lost. The powerful and shortsighted selfish private interests which operate under the guise of conservatism and commercial prosperity need a firm check or they will destroy the claim of Republicanism to a patriotic conservation of the basic interests of the American people.

Fortunately it is not too late to apply this check. Both tariff making and tax revision are more difficult problems than they have been at any time in our history, and mistakes will be made. But the American public is not unreasonable and if our lawmakers are governed by a breadth of view and a genuine desire to benefit the whole country, rather than by the special pulls of highly organized interests, they will produce legislation which can withstand the unjust attacks of partisans and demagogues.

Mr. Harding and congress have at their disposal the advice of experienced men in commerce industry, and finance who can rise above their own special interests and give direction for policies based firmly on an understanding of the broad needs of the country. This advice should be sought and used to protect the party and the country from misdirection and exploitation. It is imperative that Republican leadership in this time of sore trial and great responsibility should be true to the real interests of the American people.—Chicago Tribune.

### AMERICA'S MISSION

President Harding's speeches indicate a growing conception of America's mission. At Gorham, N. H., he said:

"If I may tell you my own ideal for this republic, I'd like ours to be an America of mutual consideration, an America of good will, an America of perfect understanding, an America of abiding justice—nay, more; I'd like ours to be a God fearing people committed to the task of reforming the world and teaching mankind that it is not good to make warfare.

"I believe that it is going to be the mission of America and if I can be your representative in promoting that ideal I shall not have served in vain."

The Disarmament conference will give the President an opportunity to put his ideal into form.

Back in 1896 the quantitative theory of money as advocated by Mr. Bryan was denounced as a wild-eyed notion of a dreamer, but it has perhaps not escaped the attention of the public that when the federal reserve bank decided on a policy of deflation it began ordering in its reserve notes until the total reached 450 million dollars. The federal reserve bank is owned by the banks and not by the government, and it did this for the purpose of forcing down prices. The bankers know precisely the relation to prices the volume of currency bears.

The town of Bloomfield, Nebr., rather than pay what it regarded as exorbitant telephone rates to an outside corporation, has cut off all communication, and for two months has found it easily possible to do without even telephone service. John Sherman said, when resumption of specie service was under debate, that the way to resume was to resume. Bloomfield people, when it comes to a reduction of expenses, evidently believe that the way to reduce is to reduce.